

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the present application in view of the foregoing amendments and in view of the reasons that follow.

Status of Claims:

Claims 1-4 are currently being amended.

No claims are currently being added or canceled.

This amendment and reply amends claims in this application. A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the application, irrespective of whether the claims remain under examination in the application, is presented, with an appropriate defined status identifier.

After amending the claims as set forth above, claims 1-4 are pending in this application.

Claim Rejections – Prior Art:

In the Office Action, claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,432,907 to Picazo, Jr. et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,497,980 to Gorman et al.; claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Picazo in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,148,342 to Ho; claims 2 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,598,080 to Nagami et al.; and claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nagami in view of Gorman. These rejections are traversed with respect to the presently pending claims, for at least the reasons given below.

In particular, independent claims 1 and 4 have been amended to clarify that each interface unit processes an intercepted message intercepted by selectively intercepting a wavelength commonly allocated to the plurality of interface units in the optical rings, according to an internal identifier that includes information indicating an interface unit within the message relay device which is a destination of the intercepted message, where the internal identifier is internal to the message relay device. The amendments made to independent claims 1 and 4 are similar to features recited in claim 25 of the parent application serial No. 09/398,210, which was allowed by the PTO (and is now U.S. Patent No. 6,772,219).

In more detail, Picazo, Gorman, and Nagami fail to disclose, teach or suggest an interface unit which processes an intercepted message according to an internal identifier that includes information indicating an interface unit within the message relay device which is a destination of the intercepted message, where the internal identifier is internal to the message relay device.

Thus, presently pending independent claims 1 and 4 are patentable over any combination of Picazo, Gorman and Nagami.

Also, independent claim 2 has been amended to clarify that the switching unit internally sets up the bypass communication channel within the message relay device according to the internal identifier in response to a command from the commanding step, and internally switches messages transmitted from one interface unit of the message relay device to another interface unit using the bypass communication channel within the switching unit of the message relay device, where the internal identifier is internal to the message relay device. The amendment made to independent claim 2 is similar to features recited in claim 1 of the parent application serial No. 09/398,210, which was allowed by the PTO (and is now U.S. Patent No. 6,772,219).

In this regard, Picazo, Ho and Nagami fail to disclose, teach or suggest a switching unit which internally sets up the bypass communication channel according to the internal identifier and internally switches messages transmitted using the bypass communication channel within the switching unit of the message relay device, where the internal identifier is internal to the message relay device.

Thus, presently pending independent claim 2 is patentable over any combination of Picazo, Ho and Nagami.

Also, independent claim 2 has been amended to clarify that the switching unit internally sets up the bypass communication channel within the message relay device according to the internal identifier in response to a command from the commanding step, and internally switches messages transmitted from one interface unit of the message relay device to another interface unit using the bypass communication channel within the switching unit of the message relay device, where the internal identifier is internal to the message relay device. The amendment made to independent claim 2 is similar to features recited in claim 1 of the

parent application serial No. 09/398,210, which was allowed by the PTO (and is now U.S. Patent No. 6,772,219).

In this regard, all of Picazo, Ho and Nagami fail to disclose, teach or suggest a switching unit which internally sets up the bypass communication channel according to the internal identifier and internally switches messages transmitted using the bypass communication channel within the switching unit of the message relay device, where the internal identifier is internal to the message relay device.

Thus, presently pending independent claim 2 is not anticipated or obviated by any combination of Picazo, Ho and Nagami.

Also, independent claim 3 has been amended to clarify that the switching unit internally switches messages within the message relay device transmitted from one interface unit to another interface unit within the message relay device using the bypass communication channel that is assigned to transfer the input message within the message relay device in accordance with the internal identifier that is internal to the message relay device. The amendments made to independent claim 3 are similar to features recited in claim 24 of the parent application No. 09/398,210, which was allowed by the PTO (and is now U.S. Patent No. 6,772,219).

In this regard, Picazo, Ho and Nagami fail to disclose, teach or suggest a switching unit which internally switches messages transmitted using the bypass communication channel that is assigned to transfer the input message within the message relay device in accordance with the internal identifier that is internal to the message relay device.

Thus, independent claim 3 is not anticipated or obviated by any combination of Picazo, Ho and Nagami.

Conclusion:

Since all of the issues raised in the Office Action have been addressed in this Amendment and Reply, Applicant believes that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and an early indication of allowance is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that a telephone interview would advance the prosecution of the present application.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required regarding this application under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. Should no proper payment be enclosed herewith, as by a check or credit card payment form being in the wrong amount, unsigned, post-dated, otherwise improper or informal or even entirely missing, the Commissioner is authorized to charge the unpaid amount to Deposit Account No. 19-0741. If any extensions of time are needed for timely acceptance of papers submitted herewith, Applicant hereby petitions for such extension under 37 C.F.R. §1.136 and authorizes payment of any such extensions fees to Deposit Account No. 19-0741.

Respectfully submitted,

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